
Arizona State Board of Education

A+ Program Parent Satisfaction Survey Summary Report

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INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned by the Arizona State Board of Education in conjunction with the Arizona Department of Education as part of the statewide academic accountability measure, or A+ Program. The purpose of the study was to measure parents' satisfaction with the Arizona public school system.

The information presented in this document is based on a six week study in which 2989 surveys were collected statewide from parents of children in both public and charter schools grades Kindergarten through 12th. Surveys were collected both online and in paper form.

SURVEY OVERVIEW

This statewide academic accountability measure, or A+ Program study has been conducted for several years by the State Board of Education. In the past, the survey was conducted via telephone in which respondents were randomly selected statewide and asked questions about their satisfaction level of their children's schools. Results were reported for traditional and charter, elementary and high schools, in Maricopa and Pima counties and rural Arizona.

For this year's survey, a different approach was taken to administer the survey. First, in addition to the information asked in prior years, additional information was included in the survey asking parents' opinion specifically in regards to federal and state accountability measures, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Arizona LEARNS. In addition, questions were posed regarding the School Report Cards published by the Arizona Department of Education. Detailed demographic data was solicited from the participants, which also differed from past administrations of the survey. Another important change for this year's administration was that the survey was not conducted via telephone. Instead, the survey was available to parents online and in a paper format, in both English and Spanish versions.

The survey was available from April 16 to June 4, 2004 on the Arizona Department of Education's (ADE) website. To advance the project and gain participation, Spanish and English flyers promoting the survey effort were disseminated to all public schools statewide in early April 2004. Additionally, a limited number of surveys, based on the school's enrollment, were included with the flyers sent to schools for school administrators to share with parents opting to take a paper version of the survey at the school site. If the number of surveys sent to schools was not enough for the school population, additional copies were sent to the schools upon request. In addition, the survey was also downloadable from the ADE website so that schools, districts, and parents could print and copy the survey; downloadable surveys were also available in both English and Spanish.

SURVEY RESULTS

This year's statewide academic accountability measure or A+ Program survey consisted of twenty-nine opinion questions and 10 demographic/informational questions. The complete survey is included at the end of this report. The survey project yielded 2989 surveys, 2641 of which were completed online.

Overall, the survey found parents to be highly satisfied with their children's schools. Parents in general are knowledgeable about the state and federal accountability measures in Arizona, as well as the School Report Cards published by the Arizona Department of Education. Summary results are presented below. For the purpose of this presentation, the results have been grouped into five categories:

- School Information
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – The Federal Accountability System
- AZ LEARNS – Arizona's Accountability System
- School Report Cards
- Demographic Information

School Information

Parents who completed this survey hold a favorable opinion about their children's schools. Nearly one half of Arizona parents (49.7%) give the public school their oldest child attends a grade of A or higher. An additional 27 percent give schools a B grade while fifteen percent give schools a grade of C. Only 4.7% give their child's schools a D grade and 3.5% grade their oldest child's school as Failing.

Additionally, the level of positivism for parents is higher for parents of children who attend Arizona charter schools. Over seventy percent of the parents of students in charters schools give schools a grade of at least A compared to 43.1% of parents of traditional public school children.

Parents whose children attend schools in Maricopa and Pima Counties generally hold a more favorable opinion of their children's schools. Over 52 percent of parents in Maricopa and Pima counties give their child's school a grade of at least A. This contrasts with almost 44% of rural area parents giving the same ratings.

In addition, parents of children in elementary schools hold more positive opinions than parents of high school aged children. Fifty-five percent of parents of elementary age children giving at least a grade of A compared to thirty-nine percent for parents of high school students. Table 1 below summarizes these findings:

Table 1: Results based on School Type, School Location, and School Grade Offerings

Students are given the grade A+, A, B, C, D and Failing to denote the quality of their work, using the same A+, A, B, C, D and Failing scale, what grade would you give the public school that your oldest child attends

	A+	A	B	C	D	Failing	Total in Analysis
All Schools	19.2%	30.5%	27.1%	14.9%	4.7%	3.5%	2928
Traditional	14.02%	28.99%	29.90%	17.34%	5.78%	3.96%	2197
Charter	35.06%	35.34%	18.44%	7.54%	1.68%	1.96%	716
Rural	17.35%	26.39%	26.29%	18.51%	6.31%	5.15%	951
Urban (Maricopa/Pima Counties)	19.95%	32.42%	27.58%	13.25%	4.07%	2.73%	1940
Elementary (K-8)	22.06%	32.52%	25.88%	12.44%	4.12%	2.97%	2017
High School (9-12)	12.75%	26.16%	29.71%	20.62%	6.21%	4.55%	902

Note: all differences were found to be statistically significant between groups in the analysis.

In addition to the grades parents assign to their children's schools, information regarding parental involvement at the schools was solicited with parents reporting the level of participation they engage in on campus in activities, volunteering, etc. Those parents who are actively involved in their children's schools hold more positive opinions with a little over 54% of those who are "very involved" in the school giving it a rating of A or A+. Table 2 summarizes these findings:

Table 2: Grades Given to School Based on Involvement Level of Parents

	A+	A	B	C	D	Failing	Total in Analysis
Very involved	24.6%	29.8%	24.9%	12.3%	5.0%	3.4%	1428
Somewhat involved	13.8%	32.4%	29.4%	17.1%	4.7%	2.7%	1306
Not at all involved	16.3%	23.7%	26.8%	20.0%	3.7%	9.5%	190

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – The Federal Accountability System

In addition to the information about their child's specific schools, parents were asked in two sections of the survey about school accountability. The first part of the accountability questions focused on the federal accountability legislation, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and a component of that legislation, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Initially, parents were asked to identify if they were familiar with the NCLB legislation, and almost two-thirds of the parents (63.9%) are at least somewhat familiar with federal accountability system. Eleven percent have no knowledge of the NCLB legislation. Parents were also asked to report their opinion of the legislation. Of those who have knowledge of the legislation, sixty-three percent of the parents have at least a somewhat favorable opinion of the No Child Left Behind act. Tables 3 and 4 below detail the specifics about the NCLB questions on the survey:

Table 3: How much Parents know about No Child Left Behind

	A Great Deal	Somewhat	Very Little	Nothing at All	Number in Analysis
How much, if anything, would you say you know about the No Child Left Behind Act - the federal education bill that was passed by Congress in 2001?	22.3%	41.6%	34.9%	11.3%	2956

Table 4: Parent's Opinion of No Child Left Behind

	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Unfavorable	Number in Analysis
From what you have heard or read about the act, what is your opinion of the NCLB act	16.9%	46.5%	22.7%	13.9%	2525

Once specific questions regarding the No Child Left Behind act were posed, questions were asked regarding Adequate Yearly Progress, a component of the NCLB legislation in which schools are assessed in terms of the progress they are making based on state academic standards. Parents were asked to identify if they knew their child's school received an Adequate Yearly Progress determination. Two-thirds of the parents know that their child's school received an AYP determination. Of those who knew of the Adequate Yearly Progress process, parents were asked what the final AYP determination was for their child's school. An overwhelming 92.1% of the parents who know of the AYP determination list their child's school as making Adequate Yearly Progress. Table 5 below highlights those results:

Table 5: Parents Knowledge of Adequate Yearly Progress

Under the act, a school's performance is evaluated annually to determine if the school is making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), do you know if your oldest child's school is making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)? If so, is the school making Adequate Yearly Progress?

	Yes, school made Adequate Yearly Progress	No, school did not make Adequate Yearly Progress	Number in Analysis
Yes (aware of Adequate Yearly Progress)	92.1%	7.9%	1858
No (not aware of Adequate Yearly Progress)	N/A	N/A	251

AZ LEARNS – Arizona's Accountability System

The second part of accountability that parents were asked to comment on was AZ LEARNS – Arizona's State Accountability System. Parents were asked to identify if they were familiar with the AZ LEARNS accountability system, and less were familiar with the state accountability than were with the federal NCLB. Thirty-seven percent of the parents surveyed are at least somewhat familiar with Arizona's accountability system. Thirty-five percent have no prior knowledge of AZ LEARNS. Parents were also asked to report their opinion of AZ LEARNS. Of those who have knowledge of the Arizona accountability system, sixty-six percent of the parents have at least a somewhat favorable opinion of Arizona LEARNS. Tables 6 and 7 below detail the specifics about the AZ LEARNS questions on the survey:

Table 6: How Much Parents Know about AZ LEARNS

	A Great Deal	Somewhat	Very Little	Nothing at All	Number in Analysis
How much, if anything, would you say you know about AZ LEARNS – Arizona's Accountability System?	9.8%	27.7%	27.4%	35.1%	2946

Table 7: Parent's Opinion of AZ LEARNS

	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Unfavorable	Number in Analysis
From what you have heard or read about AZ LEARNS, what is your opinion of Arizona's accountability system?	10.3%	56.1%	24.9%	8.6%	1911

Once specific questions about the familiarity and opinion of AZ LEARNS were posed, questions were asked regarding the Achievement Profiles, a component of the AZ LEARNS legislation in which schools are assessed and given labels based on their performance on state academic standards. Parents were asked to identify if they knew their child's school received an Achievement Profile. Half of the parents surveyed (50.2%) know their child's school received an Achievement Profile. Parents were then asked what the final Achievement Profile was for their child's school. Of the parents that know the school received an Achievement Profile, 86.7% list their child's school as Performing, Highly Performing, or Excelling. Table 8 below highlights those results:

Table 8: Parent's Knowledge of AZ LEARNS

Under AZ LEARNS -Arizona's accountability system, schools are rated as Failing, Underperforming, Performing, Highly Performing or Excelling. Do you know the rating of your oldest child's school? If so, what is the school's rating?

	Under-performing	Performing	Highly Performing	Excelling	Did not receive a profile	Small School
Yes (know if school received an Achievement Profile)	8.9%	37.4%	24.1%	25.2%	2.6%	1.8%
No (know if school received an Achievement Profile)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

School Report Cards

In addition to the federal and state accountability measures, parents were asked to comment on the School Report Cards published annually by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). When asked how much if anything the parents knew of the School Report Cards, 57.6% are at least somewhat aware of their existence. Fewer than 20% of those surveyed have no knowledge of the School Report Cards. Table 9 below details parents' knowledge of the School Report Cards:

Table 9: Parent's Knowledge of School Report Cards

	A Great Deal	Somewhat	Very Little	Nothing at All	Number in Analysis
How much, if anything, would you say you know about School Report Cards published by the Department of Education?	20.8%	36.8%	22.9%	19.5%	2942

Of those who are aware of the School Report Cards, 64.6% of the parents surveyed have actually seen or accessed their child's School Report Card and half of the 64.6% reported that they have accessed the School Report Card often or very often. Additionally, of those who know of the School Report Cards, 87.8% have at least a somewhat favorable opinion of them. Tables 10, 11, and 12 below detail the specifics about if and how often School Report Cards are accessed and parent opinions of School Report Cards:

Table 10: Parent's Level of Access to the School Report Card

	Yes	No	Number in Analysis
Have you ever accessed your student's School Report Card?	64.6%	35.4%	2352

Table 11: Parent's Use of the School Report Cards

	Very Often	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Number in Analysis
How often have you accessed your student's School Report Card?	22.9%	26.7%	36.7%	9.5%	4.1%	1505

Table 12: Parent's Opinion of School Report Cards

	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Unfavorable	Number in Analysis
From what you know about the School Report Cards, what is your opinion of them?	30.4%	57.4%	9.6%	2.6%	1479

Demographic Information

Parents were also asked to report optional, demographic information on this year's survey. Most of the parents participating in the study offered the demographic information (85.3%). Below is the information highlighting that information:

Age: Mean Range	40 Years 19-74 Years
Gender: Female Male	85.6% 14.4%
Ethnicity: Asian African American Hispanic Native American White Other	1.0% 1.8% 10.8% 3.3% 80.9% 2.1%
Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widow(ed)	8.4% 81.1% 9.3% 1.2%
Income Level: 00000-19999 20000-29999 30000-39999 40000-49999 50000-59999 60000-69999 70000-79999 80000-89999 90000-over	6.9% 7.2% 9.0% 11.4% 10.4% 10.4% 9.4% 7.7% 27.6%
Number of years in Arizona:	20.36 years (Mean)
Number of people in the home:	3.96 persons (Mean)
Number of children in the home:	2.14 children (Mean)

CONCLUSION

This study has found that overall parents are positive with their children's schools with many parents giving high marks to those schools, particularly in urban areas, elementary schools, and in Arizona charter schools.

Across Arizona, parents are familiar with the federal and state accountability systems and have favorable opinions of those systems. In addition to favorable impressions, the parents are also aware of the AYP and AZ LEARNS determinations of their children's schools. Additionally, School Report Cards are being used across the

state of Arizona and the parents who access the report cards responded that they use them often and have favorable opinions of them.

One limitation to the study was the sample that was drawn. Despite having the online access and paper surveys distributed statewide, the vast majority of the participants were married, female, non-ethnic, highly involved in their children's schools, and have a higher household income making the generalizability of these findings difficult. The sample drawn also made a useful comparison of groups almost impossible, as the numbers of responses from some of the demographic groups were limited. Changes to future administrations will have to be addressed to account for the sampling bias in the online method of data collection. In addition to the change of sampling method, future analyses will have to take place to look at differences between various groups including differences among gender, ethnic groups, and those with various household incomes.

Another change that will have to be made to future administrations of the survey is the addition of open-ended questions. This will provide parents the opportunity to give school specific comments that may help future studies flesh out the reasons why particular ratings are given by parents. This type of data are extremely helpful in discovering differences in schools that are highly ranked as opposed to those with less favorable ratings.

Regardless of the changes that need to be made and the findings in this study, the fact remains that across Arizona, parents are willing to take the time to share their opinions about their children's schools.